

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P 270930Z SEP 76

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6462

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1945

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJECT: THE PEKING SCENE: MOURNING AND CELEBRATION ON NATIONAL DAY

REF: (A) PEKING 1905 (B) PEKING 1938

1. THE PRECISE RATIO OF MOURNING TO CELEBRATION PERMISSIBLE ON THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL DAY REMAINS MURKY. INITIALLY IT HAD SEEMED THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS WOULD REFUSE UNCONDITIONALLY ALL INVITATIONS TO SOCIAL FUNCTIONS THROUGH ABOUT OCTOBER 9 (REF A). BUT WHERE CHINESE EMPHASIZED THE DEPTHS OF THEIR GRIEF BY ALLOWING VISITING FORMER NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER ROWLING TO DINE ALONE THROUGHOUT HIS VISIT (REF B), THEY HOSTED ALL SCHEDULED MEANS FOR THE TRAVELING SCHLESINGER PARTY -- TAKING CARE TO EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THESE REPASTS WERE NOT "BANQUETS" BUT "ORDINARY MEALS" (PIAN-FAN). DANCING GIRLS OF URUMCHI WERE STRUCK FROM THE SCHLESINGER ITINERARY AS TOO FRIVOLOUS DURING A PERIOD OF MOURNING, BUT THE SCHLESINGER DELEGATION WAS INVITED IN HUHOHAOTE TO ATTEND A SPORTS COMPETITION AT A "CLUB" (CHU-LE-PU).

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2. IN PEKING LAST EVENING (SEPT 26) MILITIA STANDING A FEW

YARDS APART CORDONED OFF THE TIEN AN MEN SQUARE AREA FOR SEVERAL HOURS TO ALL BUT MOTOR VEHICLES WHILE THE STRUCTURES, SIGNS, PLANTS AND WREATHS SET UP FOR THE MEMORIAL CEREMONY WERE DISMANTLED AND REMOVED. WITH TIEN AN MEN NO LONGER THE FOCAL POINT FOR UNIQUE PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES, THE CROWDS AND CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE OF LAST WEEK HAVE EVAPORATED.

3. IN SEVERAL OF PEKING'S RECREATIONAL AREAS -- THE SUMMER PALACE GROUNDS, THE TEMPLE OF HEAVEN PARK, AND THE JADE BAMBOO PARK -- WORK ON STALLS FOR NATIONAL DAY BEGAN OVER THE WEEKEND, SUGGESTING THAT THE MASSES MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HOLIDAY FOR THE TRADITIONAL OUTING.

4. THERE IS INCREASING PRESS AND DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY SPECULATION ON THE STATE OF THE PRC LEADERSHIP. THE SOVIETS AND THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN ALLIES, PERHAPS IN PIQUE AT THE REJECTION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PARTY CONDOLENCE MESSAGES, HAVE ATTEMPTED TO POISON THE ATMOSPHERE FURTHER BY SPREADING THE HIGHLY IMPROBABLE TALE THAT POSTERS READING "NOW THAT MAO IS GONE, LET'S GIVE THE OTHERS ANOTHER CHANCE" HAVE BEEN SEEN AROUND TOWN. IF THE LEADERSHIP NEITHER TURNS OUT NOR ISSUES AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT ON NATIONAL DAY, HOWEVER, SUCH STORIES AND SPECULATION WILL INCREASE GEOMETRICALLY OVER COMING DAYS.

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